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ABSTRACT

Four examples are given of Teacher Corps school-based staff development projects in Massachusetts. An introductory chapter identifies characteristics of successful staff development efforts, based on participatory decision making, the needs of teachers, students, and the community, and cooperation between the university and the school. The first article describes the planning of school-community resource centers in a high school and in two middle schools. Each resource center is "owned" by its creators because of the collaboration between parents and teachers in planning, staffing, and policy making. Another focus was adopted in a Lowell high school, where a Teacher Corps needs assessment pinpointed several problem areas, but found that the teachers did not want to accept responsibility for complex curricular issues. With the approval of the principal, a committee of six department heads was empowered to address not only curricular and instructional improvement, but also teacher evaluation, thereby broadening their leadership role and improving their relations with each other. The third article describes the development and effects of a credit-bearing administrative practicum offered through Boston State College to faculty at three high schools. A case study of the actions taken by teachers participating in the practicum illustrates the positive steps involving parents and students in school events. A concluding commentary points out the distinguishing characteristics of staff development, comparing it to continuing education, professional development, and personal development. It is suggested that, through effective planning and goal orientation, staff development success stories will be common. (FG)

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Staff Development in Secondary Schools

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Preface

Teacher Corps, a program of the Department of Education, has funded projects which have as one of their goals an improved educational professional development system. Projects typically involve a university, three or four schools which include all grade levels K-12, and the community surrounding the schools. The four projects represented in this booklet are within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and are located in the urban areas of Boston, Lowell, and Worcester.

The four projects in seeking an improved educational development system in their identified schools have become intimately involved in the staff development issues affecting secondary schools. Volumes have been written which reflect the inability of educators to effect virtually any kind of significant, positive change in secondary schools. The four project directors and their staff have seriously attempted to address the impermeability to change of the secondary school and feel that their learnings are important for other staff developers. The authors have chosen to select from the totality of their staff development work discrete examples which have served as mechanisms for broader change within the secondary school.

The introductory chapter by John Norwood identifies characteristics of successful staff development efforts based on his experiences of the past five years. These characteristics can provide a framework for the reader's analysis of the three secondary staff development efforts that follow.

Jean Esposito and Susan Seibel present the process used in developing School/Community Resource Centers. The Centers in turn become a place for designing and offering further staff development opportunities for the total school community. The Centers are a staff development mechanism whereby schools can become more self-renewing.

The staff development program undertaken by Allan Alson and Mark Piechota evolved through meetings with the heads of departments and the administration of the secondary school. The meetings provided an opportunity to address the areas of curriculum and instruction, supervision, and leadership. The total school population was affected as the heads of departments began implementing their new skills and learnings.

Cleveland Clarke and Ann DePlacido present an approach called the administrative practicum which involved teachers in the identification of specific problems of the school. Each teacher through group discussion and work with other school staff designed and implemented a plan of action which would alleviate the problem.

The conclusion by Sara Massey presents a framework for distinguishing between staff development and professional development and discusses the need for collecting information on the achievements of goal-oriented staff development.

Educators involved with staff development in secondary schools are urged to study and analyze the examples and ideas presented here based on their own experience and knowledge. The problems of secondary education will not go away by simply ignoring or avoiding them. Only through the sharing of our present and future efforts will sufficient information be available for us to glean the insights and knowledge essential to improving the education of all students in secondary schools.

The authors wish to express their appreciation to Dr. Clarke of Boston State College, who originated the idea of this booklet and worked many hours to get it underway. Additionally the authors are appreciative of the many teachers, administrators, parents, and students who have been involved in these efforts to develop meaningful secondary staff development programs.

Sara Massey, Editor

Effective Staff Development Programs

John Norwood, Project Director,
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District VII Teacher Corps Project

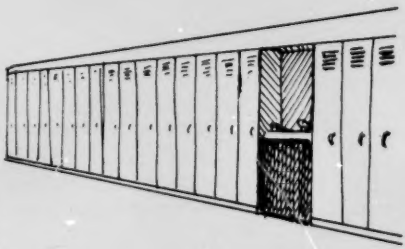
INTRODUCTION

The search for effective staff development models for school personnel is a continuous quest among professional educators. The support of staff development by federal programs such as Teacher Corps and Teacher Centers and projects of professional associations such as the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, the NEA, and AFT is indicative of the level of concern about this issue. This continuing search is based on the belief that staff development, though successful in some instances, has not effectively addressed the needs of personnel working in public education. The experience in and assessment of these projects supported through government and professional organizations have provided those working in staff development with some meaningful, though not conclusive, answers about effective models.

"Staff development" in this chapter is defined as the vehicle by which all the personnel of a school acquire processes, information and skill-enhancing experiences which afford them the opportunity to become more effective in dealing with school-wide concerns. The desired outcome of this definition of staff development is school self-renewal, a process whereby individuals as well as groups of teachers, administrators and parents work together continuously to examine issues affecting the school. This process implies individual and group capacity-building for problem definition, analysis, and resolution. Experiences in staff development projects in several cities and reading about others' experiences have led me to the conclusion that it is both possible and necessary to begin to identify those aspects of staff development projects that are most likely to result in school self-renewal. Through the examination of my professional experiences, I have begun to identify those aspects of staff development programs that seem to be essential.

1. **Representatives of all school personnel should be involved in planning staff development.**

Traditional staff development programs are for the most part aimed toward the formal teaching staff of a school. To accept this limitation can imply that the other personnel are not an integral part of the educational process for children. The assumption has been that because the greatest percentage of a student's time in most schools is spent in the classroom, only teachers need staff development which will enhance their effectiveness. But what about the relationship between the other professional and paraprofessional personnel of a school who have contact with students outside of the classroom? Inherent in this question is the belief that the educational process in school occurs outside as well as inside the classroom and that, in most cases, school personnel other than teachers do contribute to the learning process. The guidance counselor, the assistant principals, custodial workers, lunchroom supervisors, hall monitors, parents, secretarial staffs are all part of the student's education.



It may be impossible to have the entire personnel of a school involved in a planning effort. However, in a total school staff development program, representatives from each facet of the school would serve on a staff development planning team: teachers, principals, counselors, parents, students, custodians, community agency personnel, support personnel, and central administration personnel in charge of staff development. This planning team would be charged with the responsibility of devising plans and strategies to address the educational needs and concerns of the school. It is through participation in planning that ownership, consensus, and relevance emerge. Inclusion in the decision-making process builds within people a sense of efficacy and commitment. In today's schools these characteristics are sadly absent.

2. **Parents should be considered as part of the total school staff participating in the planning and implementation of programs.**

To refer to the totality of a school's existence would be inaccurate if parents were not included. While research efforts have been unable to describe the importance of their role fully, it is clear that parents' perception of and familiarity with the quality of the school does affect the performance of students in the school.

Although educators disagree about the specific influences of parents on formal schooling, few arguments contradict the strong impact that parents have on the students. It is not the role of the school to alter this impact or to change the way parents relate to their children, but it is the responsibility of the schools to depict honestly to parents the content of the school's educational program. Conflict between the home and the school is often a result of parents not knowing the purpose of the school's educational program. Schools are often unsure of what parents expect, other than that their children should be receiving an education. Both the school and the parent are concerned with the quality of education provided to children. A staff development format can be developed to begin to resolve differences in expectations and misunderstanding of purpose.

A total school staff development program and planning team would be a beginning. By being involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program, parents would have their input reflected in the school's educational program.

3. Staff development should be based on an assessment of the needs of the students of the school.

The basis for selecting the content of a staff development program should be the educational needs of the students. A clear understanding of the needs of teachers and the other personnel is an important part of any staff development program, but the relationship between student needs and teacher needs cannot be overlooked. The content of staff development programs traditionally evolves from some form of a needs assessment, usually depicting the needs of teachers, not students. Such assessments tend to make the needs of students superfluous to the staff development program and teachers rather than students become the primary beneficiaries of such programs.

Every individual comprising the staff development team has contact and experience with the students of the school. Therefore, they represent a valuable resource for getting information about student needs which should not be overlooked. They are aware of how students are responding to the total environment of the school and can provide the baseline for determining what staff development is most critical in a school.

4. Staff development should be both innovative and flexible in order to effectively meet the changing needs of students.

In traditional staff development programs innovation and flexibility are sacrificed for the sake of continuity. Many programs seem to center on the belief that the needs of school personnel and students are constant, while in reality students who enter school in September need different educational experiences by December. Their needs and, therefore, the school

personnel's needs change. Any staff development program that does not have continuous assessment and is not flexible in meeting the ever-changing needs of students and school personnel risks being antiquated and irrelevant.

5. Staff development should be site-specific.

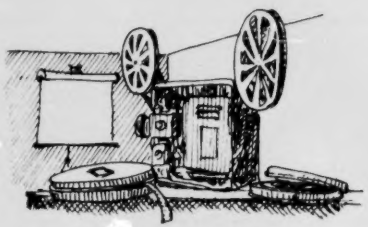
One sure way to inhibit the success of any staff develcpment program is to claim that it addresses the programmatic needs of a school, while not doing so. Most conflict around staff development evolves from this situation. Many staff development programs are touted as being site-specific in content and outcomes. However, a close examination often reveals the opposite. Site-specific is more than conducting the training programs at the school. The content of the program must evolve from the uniqueness of the school.

Many staff development programs fail because there exists no connection with a school's educational program or with students' needs. The goals and objectives of the staff development program must come from those individuals serving on the planning team who are aware of the day to day needs of their coworkers and the students within a school.

6. Staff development should be viewed as important because it enchances the participants' performance.

Staff development programs should be seen as a natural component of the educational process. Currently, much staff development is separated from the life of a school and the responsibilities of the staff. An example of this separation is the difference between the extrinsic benefits gained from participating in a staff development program and the intrinsic benefits clearly related to the needs of a school, its student body, and its educational program. The extrinsic rewards are those familiar incentives of graduate credit, stipends, and salary increments which are accrued by the participants irrespective of the impact on the learning process. These incentives unfortunately often become the only reward for participating. Intrinsic rewards should be the major incentive for participating in staff development programs.

The benefits of participating in a staff development program should be directly related to the needs of children met by the educational program. However, intrinsic rewards are often compromised by the tradition of extrinsic incentives. To recognize the extrinsic rewards and their impact on the professional advancement of educa-



tional personnel is warranted. But, it is also important to recognize that the educational profession includes intrinsic rewards — the internal satisfaction of knowing that students are learning more as a result of participant's improved performance.

7. Principals should have a central role in staff development.

Most public school educators believe that the principal should be the instructional leader of a school. He or she is the person within the organizational structure of the school who is responsible for seeing that the needs of personnel are met in such a manner that enhances or, at least, does not threaten the learning opportunities available to children. The total condition of the school is his or her responsibility. Therefore, the principal becomes a resource for and plays a central role in staff development programs.

The school's staff development program depends on the principal's active involvement. The principal is usually the one individual who can facilitate the deliberations of the staff development planning team; insure that the planning team considers the total educational program of the school; incorporate the staff development planning team as an integral part of the school's organizational structure; and provide input, along with the other planning team members, for a monitoring system that addresses the effectiveness of the staff development program. Staff development must be a part of the training experiences of principals; school systems must begin to support the principal in planning and implementing staff development programs; and the organizational structure of a school must allow principals to share their knowledge and expertise about the school's educational program.

8. Staff development programs should have formal monitoring systems.

A monitoring system that provides information on a continuing basis about effectiveness for modification of the program is needed. In addition, the total school staff development team with its wide range of information and perspective can provide an accurate assessment and realistic opinion on the success and impact of the program. Often, however, the assessment process is glossed over because it is not formalized. A formal monitoring system is necessary if planning is to be informed by experience.

9. Universities and schools must cooperate in staff development as equal partners.

Although both universities and schools are truly concerned about the quality of educational experiences for students, they play different roles in the educational process. The staff development relationship between many universities and schools is contractual. Universities, through formal agreements with school systems, are contracted to deliver the content of a specific training program.

Some of the intended outcomes of this arrangement are that university faculty members will become more familiar and knowledgeable about the realistic and practical needs of school personnel; a relationship will be established with public school systems that will allow for collaboration between the two on other professional endeavors; and such experiences will encourage the university personnel to increase their involvement with schools. However, past experiences indicate that most of these stated outcomes seldom are reached through staff development programs. The relationship between public school personnel and university personnel is often less than cooperative. A wide range of disagreement exists about the practices and instructional techniques needed to strengthen the learning opportunities for students, and public school personnel are often less than enthusiastic about university involvement in their school. Although it is possible for each to point the finger at the other, the immediate need is to encourage a set of practices and postures that will improve not only the relationship between the two, but create more meaningful staff development programs.

The structure of the planning team would allow for greater interchange between university and public school personnel. University personnel serving on the staff development planning team become more aware of the day to day needs of both students and teachers, in addition to improving their relationship with public school personnel.

Several of these nine aspects of effective staff development programs drawn from my experience are found in the following three descriptions of specific secondary staff development programs. It is hoped that each reader will have, after reading these chapters and reviewing his or her experience, a better understanding of effective staff development programs for secondary schools.

Author:
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School-Based Staff Development: School/Community Resource Centers

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INTRODUCTION

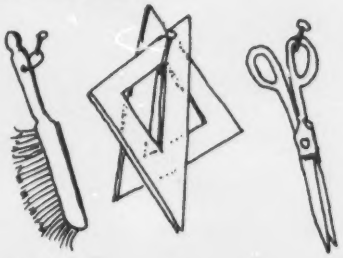
Resource centers that have been developed this year in three of the Teacher Corps project schools (North High School, Worcester East Middle School and Arthur R. Sullivan Middle School) are the subject of this chapter. The Resource Center concept has encouraged a variety of different staff development activities, each reflecting the unique people and needs in the different schools. We believe that Resource Center development represents a promising beginning, an incentive and a means for school/community interaction and ongoing professional development, two key factors which we believe can strongly affect the school learning climate for children.

The new environment that has been created in our schools, the School/Community Resource Center, is not an office, not a classroom, not a library, and not a lounge. All of these areas are firmly established "school places" where people perform certain set roles. Instead, the School/Community Resource Center can be a comfortable receptive place, "neutral turf", where teachers, parents, administrators, community people can socialize and talk as adults interested in each other and mutually concerned about children. The Resource Center can be space where teachers share ideas about new methods or materials and reap the benefits of each other's expertise, where parent or teacher support groups meet to identify and become involved with educational issues that affect learning. A Resource Center can stock, display and make available constantly changing resources — reference works, raw materials, or sample curricula created by colleagues. The Resource Center can sponsor workshops or presentations that draw university or community resources into the school or that inform community members

about school programs and activities. Such a Center can be all or none of these things. Its existence and continued life depends upon the school and community people who create and use it.

Creating three Resource Centers, as well as designing diverse activities for each center, became part of a learning process by which school and community participants as well as Teacher Corps staff members have developed new skills and confidence in sharing and implementing ideas. We have discovered that parents' and community members' interaction with teachers and administrators has become a significant means for professional growth. This interaction provides 1) a way to learn more about adolescents' lives outside the classroom and about the community surrounding each school, 2) a stimulus to rethink and then clearly describe school curricula and programs to community members, and 3) an opportunity to provide instruction in basic skills to interested adults who can reinforce study skills as volunteers in school or as parents at home.

BELIEFS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL GROWTH



Our work to create Resource Centers was founded on certain beliefs about professional growth. Professional growth that empowers people to make decisions, on an individual and collective level, energizes them to make changes in their own lives and to influence others as well. Professional growth that is self-initiated will be more personally meaningful and have more potential for lasting change. Self-initiated activity by its nature will focus on people's strengths and their ability to identify needs as well as to develop ways to meet them. Self-initiated staff development contrasts sharply with the more traditional approach of diagnosis and remediation, which tends to emphasize people's deficits rather than their assets. A deficit approach not only threatens self-esteem, but also fails to gain the "ownership" of participants to create meaningful changes for themselves. Self-initiated staff development presupposes an inherent desire on the part of educators to do a good job and, given the opportunity, to continue to grow professionally.

Professional growth is a long developmental process, not a single event, and a highly personal experience that individuals move through in different ways and at different rates. Ongoing staff development that involves participants in planning and implementing diverse activities at their school site can respond to the different levels of professional growth and concern.

PLANNING A RESOURCE CENTER: PROCESS VS PRODUCT

At first, we found that the idea of creating a Resource Center strongly encouraged "initiators" to focus on the product or the place. After an area is allocated, many pressures to "produce", to quickly set up an attractive, inviting space can descend upon the planners. However, fostering a true ownership of a Resource Center on the part of teachers, administrators and parents, encouraging genuine collaborative planning about what they want in their space, takes much longer. The short term goal of "implanting" a Resource Center in a school resembles a "quick fix" approach that ultimately does little to encourage a Center's meaningful use by those for whom it was supposedly designed.

A much longer process was necessary to gain ownership and to begin determining the goals of such Centers. The goals that emerged were:

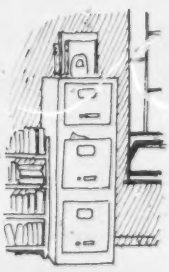
1. To improve the school learning climate
2. To foster ongoing professional development and support for school personnel
3. To strengthen positive communication and collaboration among the schools and community

All agreed that the above goals were important — that they reflected real needs as identified by teachers, administrators, and members of the community in our Teacher Corps project. We also agreed that any effort to change a school learning climate and to encourage new behaviors on our part must take place within the unique culture of each school.

We found that a long-term planning process ebbs and flows. At times things move along tangibly and quickly. Committees get organized, decisions are made and people take responsibility for many tasks. At other times, things seem to be at a virtual standstill. One project has been completed and little is happening to identify or move toward a next step. Yet, we also discovered that these intermittent periods of calm are often times for reflection and redirections — necessary parts of an ongoing process that meets ever-changing needs.

STAGES IN CENTER DEVELOPMENT

What we learned from participating in the simultaneous planning of three different Resource Centers in a high school and two middle schools has helped us to focus on certain key steps which may be useful to others.



1. Finding a Space

Involving the building principals in planning for a Resource Center is a crucial

first step. The allocation of space is a sensitive issue that requires administrative and teacher agreement and cooperation, especially since the space needs to be set aside for exclusive use as a Resource Center where new kinds of adult interaction can take place. We held two day-long summer meetings with principals and teacher representatives to discuss Teacher Corps activities, school goals in general and the Resource Center concept in particular. As a result, space in each school was initially identified. Principals continued to be involved in Resource Center development at their schools and supported myriad printing, building and refurbishing projects during the year.

Space in one middle school was apportioned from part of a large library, with the librarian's support. The principal and a task force of teachers and community members requested support from the school system to build a dividing wall between two areas. After some delays and many months of effort, the wall, complete with a new door and window, was built and painted. This divider represented an impressive concrete achievement of a school/community group working together toward a common goal. Spaces in the two other schools were created out of a teacher lounge and a mailroom and a teacher aide office.

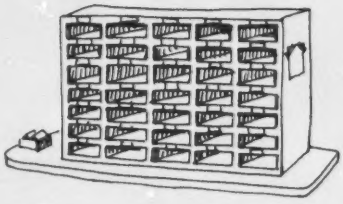
2. Designing the Space

Once a space has been clearly defined, a committee of interested community members and teachers can begin to design the environment and set it up. Our committees included volunteer teachers and community members as well as teachers earning university credit for their participation and the Teacher Corps Curriculum Resource Specialist who served as facilitator for the committees.

Planning for the environment occurred in many stages. First, the "dream stage" was a time for brain storming. Using the open-ended statement, "A Resource Center can be . . .", individuals gave their input. A Resource Center can be "a place for departments to work together", "a place to train teachers to work with community members", "a room where parents could teach an activity", "an information center", "a display area", "a creative problem-solving space", "a room for workshops". As a part of the "dream stage", some committee members surveyed other faculty and community members to see what they wanted. When all ideas were grouped together, design of different spaces in the room to accommodate diverse needs could begin.

At this point in the planning process, groups expressed the need for a concentrated block of time to work on second stage issues — space design and goal setting. In response, a full-day

"workparty" during a regular school day was planned. Substitutes were provided for the teachers involved. Community members who were available also attended.



During the "workparty" people representing each Resource Center committee used poster-size laminated scale drawings to design furniture and equipment placement and to draw, erase and rearrange. After their spaces were designed, each group worked with a facilitator to list what they had accomplished and where they wanted to be by the end of the school year. We used "action plans" that required us to focus on clear objectives. These objectives delineated steps to be taken to create functioning Resource Centers. The action plans recorded tasks to meet objectives, persons responsible, dates for task accomplishment, resources needed and evaluation criteria. The plans were then copied and distributed to members of each school group. One person in each school group volunteered to be the "manager" of each action plan to see that tasks were completed on time. At the end of the "workparty", each school group presented their accomplishments, and the designs and future plans to the other groups. A valuable outgrowth of the "workparty" was the opportunity to share different schools' ideas about the Centers' programs. The committees found this to be so helpful that they requested a future sharing session.

3. Using the Space

Since the "workparty" took place, Resource Center committee members have followed their action plans and have moved to the "using stage". As a result, they can cite many accomplishments. Centers have become realities through their many activities: they have accommodated meetings of school task forces and Resource Center committees as well as many informal sharing sessions. Videotaping projects and workshops for parents and teachers have been held in the Resource Centers. Open houses for parents and teachers in each Center have given participants an opportunity to examine displays of teachers' or students' work, to sign up for workshops, to learn about volunteer opportunities, to take free materials donated by publishers and, perhaps most important, to become familiar with the new place in their school that is available for their use. In some Resource Centers a calendar of events has been created to avoid conflicts in use of the space, a clear testimony to its relevance for a variety of people.

PARENT HELPERS IN THE RESOURCE CENTERS

A major problem associated with the existence of any Resource Center, we all agreed, was staffing. Who is available to catalogue, stock and display materials or even to enlist and teach volunteers to do this work? Who has time to conceptualize, organize and advertise open houses or to find presenters for workshops? Who can just "be there" to welcome new school and community users of the Resource Centers or to suggest ways and means for parents, teachers and administrators to get together?

Resource Center committees have continued to remain active in developing ideas for activities. However, examining the busy schedules of the school and community people involved thus far increased our collective difficulty in answering the above questions. The answer to the dilemma of more help in implementing activities was utilizing "parent helpers."

Parent helpers are parents of children in the three Teacher Corps secondary schools who were selected by each school task force and who are paid by Teacher Corps to work five to ten hours a week in their children's schools to facilitate the ongoing functioning of the Resource Centers. Principals in the project schools, who were closely involved in designing the responsibilities of the parent helpers, wrote to the parents to describe this job opportunity. Interested parents applied for the parent helper positions and school task forces examined applications, conducted interviews and selected two finalists for each school from among the candidates. As a result, six parent helpers (two in each of the three schools) have been working on the countless tasks associated with ongoing Resource Center programs.

As members of each Resource Center committee, parent helpers have contributed valuable perspectives about useful programs which bring community resources into the schools and which strengthen school/home communication and understanding. During the past three months, parent helpers have brought over 250 parents into the schools, have established phone committees and have succeeded in bringing School Committee and City Council members in to visit the schools. As a result of a greater parent presence in the schools, a variety of school-home communication networks have been established and parent helpers are enlisting volunteers to continue their work when funding for their positions ends.

ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Increased teacher interaction with parents has become another area of professional growth. Informal exchanges with parents and community members enable school people to learn

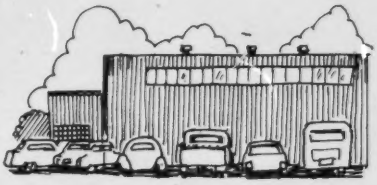
new information about their students' out-of-school lives as well as community needs and perceptions of school programs. School people are also becoming more involved in offering programs for parents. A principal has offered an evening session on "Parents' and Students' Rights." Teams of teachers at one school have met with parents of their students to explain the middle school concepts of teamed instruction, enrichment activities, skills centers and advisor-advisee relationships. Other schools have held orientations for parents of entering students as well as separate workshops on improving reading skills, individualized teaching strategies and computer-assisted instruction.

This program has stimulated new thinking and possible new approaches as teachers describe and illustrate their daily work with students to community members and, in the process, respond to parents' questions and concerns.

ONGOING COLLEGIAL SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

Plans for more staff development activities in Centers are continuing. Task force members are inviting their colleagues to make presentations about new teaching strategies or curricula that they have found to be effective in their classrooms. One school has organized a teacher support group that will meet weekly to discuss common educational concerns. Presentations on new materials supporting education that is multicultural and diagnostic-prescriptive teaching will be offered in Resource Centers during the next year. A videotape demonstrating peer support through clinical supervision made by school people and Teacher Corps staff will be shown in Resource Centers.

Maintaining ongoing self-initiated programming in Resource Centers remains our primary goal for the future. Through the slow process of developing Resource Centers, self-confidence has grown, collaboration on many levels has occurred and stereotyping among school and community people has broken down. Like Center design, use of the space will be a long-term, gradually changing phenomenon which encompasses a variety of activities arising from the discovery of various group needs. We expect that participation will ebb and flow, depending upon the cycles of energy and priority during each school year. Center groups have begun to give us clear messages that the help of a facilitator is not always neces-



sary in these meetings. At these times we realize it is desirable to disappear for a time and to encourage independence and empower individuals to move ahead on their own — our ultimate goal if a self-renewing school is to be achieved.

We believe that a new environment in each school designed to generate continuous efforts to improve schools will aid faculty, administrators and parents to plan ways to make their schools better and to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out these improvements. Looking into the future, we hope that Resource Centers that are "owned" by their creators can serve as

—neutral turf which regenerates relationships among the principals, teachers, and community members and establishes strong home/school support systems

—a professional and social environment where teacher isolation and privatism in teaching that has divided colleagues from one another can be broken down and where collective problem-solving can develop as a new school norm

—a learning laboratory where adults continue to be students of teaching; where school professionals can look for new options, polish old skills and develop new ones; and where on-the-job assistance can be available from colleagues who mutually support one another

—a stimulating climate where risk-taking by school/community personnel and experimentation in teaching and learning is encouraged and commended, where teaching becomes more than a matter of monotony and routine

In a time of declining resources, unleashing the underutilized resources of teachers' and parents' perceptions of instructional needs and problems as well as their collective talents in devising ways to solve them, strongly promotes ongoing school renewal efforts. Continuous school and community use of a Resource Center can insure that sharing and learning in order to address school problems are woven into the fabric of each school day. This fabric, reinforced by the threads of administrative and community support for and participation in instructional improvement activities, can be greatly strengthened. Thus, it can far better withstand today's societal pressures as it is pulled and pushed by forces of public disaffection, legislative mandates, accountability and economic constraints.

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WORKING WITH HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT HEADS*

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DEFINING THE PROBLEM

In November, 1979 the Lowell High School faculty responded to a Teacher Corps questionnaire, noting areas of the school that seemed to need improvement. The three items mentioned most were:

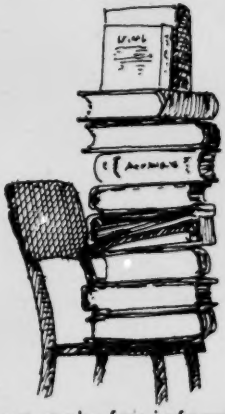
- Curriculum to deal effectively with the basic skills of students
- Student tardiness and absenteeism
- Faculty morale and job satisfaction

An increasing number of students were entering the high school unprepared for its existing courses. Many were unmotivated and deficient in reading, computation and study skills. Their lack of purpose was reflected in their continuous tardiness and absenteeism. These factors helped make teaching less than satisfactory for many faculty members, who complained about the conditions of the school, who felt harried and unappreciated, and who looked to administrators for solutions to the problems.

*Note: We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the department heads, the dean of faculty and the headmaster for both their active involvement in and approval of the contents of this article. It is through their efforts that a new, exciting and potentially successful avenue for school self-renewal has been opened at Lowell High School.

How could the Teacher Corps project be helpful? With project encouragement, the principal formed a steering committee, composed of himself and six faculty representatives. This committee organized the faculty into task forces to analyze the issues and propose solutions to them. It was assumed that teacher involvement in problem-solving would simultaneously raise morale and improve conditions in the school.

These two outcomes were achieved in a number of task forces, particularly those focusing on concrete, narrow topics such as a revised faculty handbook, an improved school communication system, and a new method for supervising students. Yet the groups looking at curricular issues made little progress. The issues seemed too complex to be easily resolved, demanding changes in scheduling, personnel, budgets, goals and objectives. Members did not want to be part of the task force effort without guarantees that their work would be productive.



Teachers seemed to be looking to the administration in general for leadership in these matters, but to which administrators specifically? The department heads seemed the logical choice. They were middle management, intermediaries between the principal and teachers on curriculum and instructional issues. However, there was no clarity about what curriculum and instruction responsibilities actually were delegated to them. They met as a group only for informational meetings chaired by the principal, seldom to discuss common concerns about curriculum and teaching. They were not the primary evaluators of the teachers in their departments, and there was no common system for curriculum evaluation and development.

With the principal's approval, it was decided to shift the focus from working directly with teachers to working with the department heads, specifically the heads of the six largest departments of the high school (English, math, science, foreign languages, social studies and business). The problem now faced was how to empower the department heads as a new leadership body for curriculum and instructional development within the school.

GETTING STARTED

It was proposed to the heads that the Teacher Corps project

work with them in three ways: 1) to help them develop a system for curriculum revision, particularly focusing on the needs of unmotivated, low-skilled students; 2) to look at ways to improve the quality of instruction in each department; and 3) to help them develop their skills for leadership in curriculum and instructional development.

The primary format to accomplish these goals was a weekly 1½ hour meeting of the heads and two Teacher Corps staff. The meetings confronted issues of curriculum and instructional improvement and encouraged the group to plan ways to deal with the issues. The meetings were also a vehicle for the heads to discuss their roles and responsibilities and how to enhance leadership in their departments and in the school. Teacher Corps staff acted as resources and facilitators of the sessions. The heads agreed to the proposal, thus beginning a series of meetings.

Previous to the first meeting, each head was interviewed to determine his or her priorities for curriculum and instructional development. The responses were recorded on newsprint and displayed at the group meeting, where each head read his or her goals. Then they identified their common concerns:

- Developing a new teacher evaluation form
- Improving curriculum and instruction for lower level students
- Clarifying the department heads' rights and responsibilities in relation to other administrators.

These concerns became the group goals.

THE PROCESS OF THE MEETINGS

After the first meeting, the sessions were chaired on a rotating basis by the department heads, each taking the responsibility for a month. The principal did not attend the meetings unless invited because he wanted them to become an independent body and felt his presence, particularly in the early stage, would retard this development. He usually came to meetings to respond to proposals that were sent to him.

The assistant principal, to whom the heads reported on a number of issues, participated in most sessions. His overview of organizational policies and procedures was invaluable to the group when it came time for decision-making. At the sessions there were nine official participants — the six heads, the assistant principal and two project staff. In addition, the project secretary attended to take minutes of the meetings.

The agenda usually resulted from a negotiation between one of the project staff and that month's chairperson. The roles and responsibilities for this negotiation remained un-

clear for most of the year. Many times, staff ended up shaping the agendas for the chairman's approval, because they had more time to think through issues. Lack of clarity about roles affected the dynamics of the meetings. The agendas were recorded on newsprint and taped to a wall, providing a visual reminder to everyone of the progress being made in a meeting, but it was often uncertain who was responsible for keeping the group focused on a topic and bringing closure to discussions. Frequently the chairman was uncomfortable with the role and staff assumed it.

In mid-year, the staff told the heads they were uncomfortable with the leadership role which had developed in the meetings, and the heads resolved to take more responsibility for setting agendas and chairing sessions. This discussion occurred just as the heads were becoming comfortable with each other and the focus and process of the meetings. From that point on, they took much more control.

DEVELOPING A NEW TEACHER EVALUATION FORM

Initially the heads were encouraged to define their goals for supervision and evaluation and to consider peer and clinical supervision as possible models. This direction was resisted. They wanted to get something done quickly and decided on revising the present teacher evaluation form, which they found vague and subjective.

As the revision process went along, questions of goals and alternative processes emerged, especially when examples of other systems' forms were reviewed. In one meeting, the heads noted aspects of the evaluation process they thought important, e.g. teacher self-analysis, pre-observation conferences and teacher feedback on the evaluation process. They were then ready to define the evaluative criteria which would be listed on the form. The task was frustrating. Criteria seemed debatable, ambiguous and over-lapping, leading one head to suggest an outside consultant to help clarify their thinking.

A consultant gave the department heads a new perspective on classroom observation, but further progress on the evaluation form was impeded by a variety of factors: holidays, the pressure of other duties, and the demands of other agenda items (i.e. release-time planning). After four months we were not very far along on revision of the evaluation form.

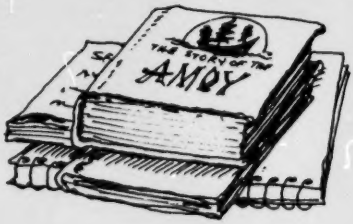
It was then agreed to meet after school hours in February to define the evaluative criteria, and one of the heads volunteered to take responsibility for coordinating work on the form. Then things started moving. The criteria went through three drafts and were put on a reorganized form ready to be shared

with other groups for their reactions. The heads realized at this point that though they had developed a new form, many things needed to be done in the coming year before it could be used in the evaluation process. These tasks included:

- writing detailed definitions of the criteria
- drafting a guide for evaluators which explained due process and the use of the form
- organizing training sessions in the use of various classroom observation techniques
- sharing their document with teachers, administrators and the teachers' organization, and seeking their refinements and approvals

In one year the heads had expanded their goals from simply altering their existing form to improving the total process of teacher supervision and evaluation.

IMPROVING CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION



Simultaneously, work on improving the curriculum was underway. It became clear that if curriculum for lower level students were going to be developed, other curricular areas would have to be reviewed simultaneously by the whole school. Most teachers agreed that curriculum development was needed but were unwilling to spend time after school doing it, and not all were concerned with curriculum for lower level students. The only alternative was to release all students from school and provide professional time for teachers to work on curriculum topics of their choice. A series of release times for the faculty to meet in subject area committees to review and develop curriculum was proposed. Each committee was to have a written plan of action with a timetable and expected product. Interdepartmental committees were encouraged. The principal suggested the heads be the coordinating body for the release time, believing this responsibility would enhance the heads' leadership and expand their view of the school. The heads accepted the task and set about planning the release time program. This effort dominated the agendas of their meetings for five months. First they organized their departments into curriculum development committees and then met three times with representatives of other subject areas of the school to explain the release time plan to solicit proposals for curriculum development.

Everyone realized coordination of the release time would be complicated. There were thirty-three sub-committees working in eighteen subject areas. The heads met for a full day to review the curriculum development proposals, assign meeting rooms and draw up a summary of each committee's proposals. One of the heads volunteered to be the primary coordinator for this program.

There were three release times (students dismissed 1½ hours early from school) for curriculum development. More was not allocated because of scheduling constraints and teacher morale problems, but it was a promising beginning.* The heads, in their report to the principal, noted that meeting together during release time to discuss curriculum was somewhat novel for many teachers, but one could see by the third session that all were applying themselves to the task and that communications were improving within departments and between teachers and administrators. In this short time, numerous course changes (reading lists, sequences) were agreed upon and initiated and promising course ideas were developed. Yet, it was just a beginning. They recommended to the principal that more release time be set aside the following year to continue the work on curriculum, and they agreed to take responsibility for coordinating it.

CLARIFYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The specific topic of rights and responsibilities was not directly addressed in the department head meetings because curriculum development and the evaluation form dominated the meetings. Yet indirectly the meetings dealt with leadership issues.

Each head took turns chairing the meetings, and when project staff pointed out that they were dominating the meetings, acting more like leaders than facilitators, the heads took more responsibility for keeping meetings on the planned agenda. At this point two heads volunteered to coordinate various activities related to the curriculum release days and the evaluation form. Simultaneously, the heads were assuming more of a leadership function in the school. Their responsibility for coordinating the release times was giving them more organizational visibility and power. By the end of the year, they were planning second-year activities which would expand their work on curriculum and the evaluation system and solidify their new roles in the school.

*Note: It was difficult for some teachers to devote energy to curriculum development when they were not certain they would be rehired. Budgetary cuts resulting from Massachusetts' passage of Proposition 2½ were threatening the release of 50% of the city's teachers.

IMPACT

The results of the department heads' work need to be measured against both the original objectives and the unanticipated outcomes. A new form for teacher evaluation was the primary objective identified by the department heads prior to their meetings. As of this writing, a draft form has been prepared to be field-tested in the school during the next academic year. The second objective of curriculum development and review was more broadly based, slower than anticipated and more oriented toward higher level courses. The work of developing department head leadership, though, has had significant impact. This impact can be viewed from three perspectives — the effect on individual department heads, the effect on the department heads as a group and the effect on the high school organization.

As outsiders who have slowly lost objectivity, project staff find it difficult to measure the personal change of the department heads. How do individuals who have spent fifteen to thirty years in a school system change in their perceptions of curriculum and instruction, and in their views of their role in the school organization? One department head, who has obviously spent more time with his colleagues than we have, characterized the change in terms of increased "self-confidence" and "self-esteem." Another department head was even more specific and self-assured about the changes she had undergone.

> "I get self-satisfaction from our meetings . . . The meetings have widened my horizons."

What effect has the year had on the department heads as a group? One department head explained that before the meetings, "The department heads never worked as a group." The department heads had no tradition of meeting together to plan, implement or monitor either curriculum and instruction nor had they examined together the supervision process they were mandated to follow. There had not been a history of collective action across departments. Previously, the agenda for the department heads meetings had been set by the principal and, while this did not necessarily perturb the department heads, it certainly did not promote their roles as educational leaders and it prevented them from discovering and sharing common concerns.

It was the principal who made the conscious decision to vest more power, responsibility and accountability with the department heads. He was willing to have them explicitly take a leadership role in both teacher supervision and curriculum development. In an interview, one department head indicated how things had changed during the year.

> The meetings have given department heads an opportunity to come together. Before, the department head meetings with the principal were done from his point of view, his problems. His agenda structured the meetings. He chaired them . . . Now there's more discussion, they're free. More chance to talk among ourselves, bring things out in the open . . . It's an opportunity to address things we want to address — our needs . . . Before this we just accepted what was there.

There exists a healthy dynamic tension between the department heads and the principal regarding responsibility and accountability for curriculum and instruction. This changes the static condition which existed previously. It has been a significant step this year for the principal to explicitly move curriculum and instruction responsibility to the department heads. The shift has been accompanied by the principal's expectations for evidence of concrete change. Though his expectations are certainly tempered by his understanding of organizational reality, they are nonetheless a factor in the department heads' productivity and motivation. The willingness of the principal to risk change and be supportive of the department heads should not be minimized. Conversely, the widening new niche enjoyed by the department heads as significant mid-level administrators is a result of their effort to take advantage of the responsibility relinquished by the principal.

In many ways the group's change has been almost imperceptible. Department heads have begun, though still not on every occasion, to function in a cohesive manner demonstrated by the increased frequency of department heads behaving in an initiating rather than a reacting mode. They have started to discover what is important to themselves as a group in regard to curriculum, instruction and supervision. They more importantly identify themselves as a leadership body in the school — a group with the potential strength to collectively represent curricular and instructional needs to the principal. In turn, the department heads have begun to develop a vision of the entire school as a complex organization.

A sampling of department head comments supports the notion that the meetings have helped them to see the school from a broader perspective and to feel a higher degree of affiliation with the organization.

"Department head meetings cause you to react to the needs of other departments — not just your own."

"I get self-satisfaction from our meetings. I'm getting aware of the school — the total school."

"Before, the department head meetings were announcements of deadlines and budgets. Now I feel a part of the whole school."

"In the spring we were individually oriented. Now we see what we have in common."

Another change felt by the department heads is in regard to the relationship they have with the faculty in their departments. They believe that the department head meetings and subsequent curriculum development activities by teachers have enhanced their status in the school as educational leaders. Specifically, there has been a shift in the organization's perception of them. Previously, they were often viewed as administrative functionaries to fulfill tasks such as scheduling, distribution of supplies and student transfers. Rarely were they seen as the "prime movers" for review of curriculum and instruction. Now as one department head commented about his colleagues, "They seem to have more respect from the school. They are visible, active, leading."

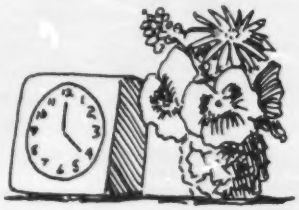
As discussed earlier the changes which have taken place did not occur inexplicably or overnight, nor are they yet changes which have reached a measure of permanence. In Lewin's (1948) model of change — unfreezing, change and refreezing — the department heads may be viewed as nearing completion of the unfreezing stage and entering the actual change process. If the momentum continues, another year should yield the beginning stage of refreezing or institutionalizing those changes which have taken place.

An interesting shift of focus has occurred in the department head meetings. Initially their attention was primarily on the completion of short-term concrete tasks. For example, the creation of a new teacher evaluation form, once thought to be a simple, straightforward matter, turned out to be an extremely complex task. Each question raised seemed to point to two additional questions. This activity, as well as the renewed sense that curriculum development is dependent upon many variables and people, has moved the department heads to view change from a more long-term perspective.

A willingness and perseverance to grapple with the intricacies and subtleties of change is present. Further, their work demonstrates a recognition that while change may be quite slow and sometimes painful, the rewards are worth both

the time and energy required. The benefits have begun to accrue on personal, group and organizational levels.

The changes are not restricted to the department heads alone. The project staff learned that the original goals had unrealistic time-lines. They did not take into account how slowly organizations reorient themselves to new ideas — particularly segments of the organization with whom there was little contact, the other departments and administrators. They also overlooked the possibility of significant political changes in the community — changes which would threaten teachers' job security and destroy their morale. In working with the department heads, staff have also learned how difficult it is to be outside facilitators: when to offer advice, when to comment on the process, when to participate as a peer and when to speak as an expert. The staff are still making mistakes and still learning.



After one year of department heads working together and working with "outside facilitators," a number of learnings can be gleaned from the experience. In turn, these learnings can be translated into general recommendations for those who wish to explore a similar venture. The recommendations set forth below are intended to provide guidelines for professionals who chose to create a group of high school department heads who will eventually be seen as initiating leaders rather than responding managers.

1. The high school administrator (principal or headmaster as they are known in New England) should clearly state the administrative and organizational expectations for the working group. These expectations, when feasible, might include a time-line.
2. It is critical for the school administrator to be supportive of this process by offering both explicit and implicit recognition to the group that while evidence of change and growth is expected, it is also acknowledged that group development and organizational change is a slow process.
3. Through administrative support and perhaps role definition, department heads need to develop their own internal leadership which will foster group accountability among themselves and within the organization.
4. After this internal leadership has been structured, careful attention must be paid to group process matters, dynamics during meetings and recording of significant decisions or plans.

5. When necessary, department heads should focus on learning "process" techniques (e.g. brainstorming, issue analysis) related to problem solving.
6. When outside facilitators are involved, they need to be aware of the internal organizational dynamics as well as external school system forces. Their response should emphasize the developmental nature of group building.
7. Any work done by outside facilitators should directly reflect the needs and concerns expressed by department heads, administrators and other faculty members.

A major purpose of the work of the Lowell High School department heads has been to accentuate the school's own internal personnel resources. More specifically, it has been to develop and make visible the curricular and instructional leadership capabilities of the department heads. As Esposito (1980) states:

> Underlying all of the educational research findings about successful stafff development activities is an emphasis on using a most under-utilized educational resource: teachers' and principals' experience-based perceptions of their needs and instructional problems as well as their collective talents in devising ways to solve them.

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The Administrative Practicum: A Staff Development Model

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INTRODUCTION

Much has been written in recent years in educational textbooks and professional journals about training modes employed to bring about instructional improvement of educational personnel serving in our nation's public schools. Colloquiums, conferences, non-credit workshops, study groups, credit-generating courses and consultant services are training modes cited in the literature. No matter which training mode is in vogue or is chosen by a school, a major generalized assumption behind staff development programs conducted in our schools is that the education of children will not be changed very much unless the professional and personal lives of those who interact directly or indirectly with them in the school situation are made even richer with fruitful professional learning experiences. A carefully planned and successfully implemented staff development training program is seen as being able to do the following:

- provide the opportunity for educational personnel (teachers, principals, librarians, guidance counselors, department heads, superintendents, etc.) to keep abreast of current trends in their respective fields of specialization
- provide for educational personnel the opportunity not only to acquire new skills but to polish or eliminate overworked, outmoded ones as well
- provide the opportunity for educational personnel to experience ongoing self-assessment and self-renewal
- provide for a richer interactive environment for all role groups involved in the educational setting

In examining the historical perspectives of staff development programs, we find that in the past it was common practice for school systems to organize inservice activities without seeking significant input from those for whom the activities were intended. For example, teachers for whom most staff development training was directed had very little opportunity to influence the nature or the scope of the training. Traditionally the managers of the system (superintendent, principals, supervisors) determined the need for training and were responsible for determining all the logistical and program plans for the delivery of such training. The result was that in too many cases the training areas delineated for staff development activity were not always relevant to the needs and concerns of teachers.

The Boston State College Teacher Corps staff development model gets to the heart of this problem in that it embraces the philosophy that teachers and administrators — indeed all educational personnel of a school or school system — must participate in decisions that determine the nature, scope and delivery of inservice activity that has as its primary goal the professionalization and development of personnel. The primary argument in support of this democratic approach is that people are changed through participation. In the past, attempts to improve school curriculum and professional instruction by having outside experts develop new programs or by having state, regional or local committees develop new courses of study as well as training packets for teachers failed, mostly because the intended agents of change were not intimately involved in the initial planning and developmental tasks.

Obviously if curriculum revision is to be an outcome of change in people, then staff members must unquestionably become involved in curriculum study and experimentation. Participation provides the major key to professional improvement. Staff members who are denied access to decision-making committees or who are never polled for input when change is contemplated will never really experience a true sense of growth and belonging. Staff members be they teachers, principals, department heads, librarians or guidance counselors are likely to become terribly alienated and disinterested. How often have we seen teachers close their classroom doors and completely disengage themselves from the overall functioning of the

school? How often have we seen teachers and other personnel participating in after-school staff development activities only because their attendance was mandated? How often have students been prompted into disruptive behavior of extreme dimensions in school corridors because teachers have not intervened? This disengagement, this inability to act in a manner that demonstrates professional sophistication and maturity, is often dismissed with such pat responses as "that's the responsibility of the principal", or "what does he want me to do — his job and mine too?", or "under the rules of the contract, I don't have to do that."

Attitudes and responses of this sort may seem grossly and professionally irresponsible, but we cannot totally blame any single role group because the structure of our schools often sets the stage for certain unpredictable behaviors. For too long teachers have been led to believe that they have but little effect on the running of the total school organization. Division of responsibility for them means operating in the narrow boundaries of a classroom.

How do we turn this unfortunate situation around? How can educational personnel be made to realize that they can grow within the scope of the institution and can become agents of change? How do we get educational personnel to be active innovators rather than passive, worn-out, uninformed field-hands in the school environment? For school climate to be improved, teachers and administrators, indeed all educational personnel, must work collaboratively on staff development activities. If we want to get individuals engaged, if we want them to experience growth and improvement within an organization, we must interrupt the cycle of powerlessness that entraps them.

The Administrative Practicum instituted by the Boston State College and Boston Public Schools Teacher Corps Project is an attempt to help educational personnel within the project schools break the "powerless cycle" by providing opportunities for staff members to work on problems that they had thought no one either cared about or was interested in solving. This staff development format gives the individual teacher or administrator a remarkable opportunity to help bring about change and improvement in school climate and to experience growth in problem-solving skills.

WHAT IS THE ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICUM AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

The Administrative Practicum is an activity in which educational personnel of a school engage in an attempt to resolve crucial problems that relate to school climate. Carried out effectively, it gives role groups within a school, especially teachers and administrators, the opportunity to work collaboratively in responding to or solving problems identified in that school. Two basic assumptions underlie the development and implementation of the model: 1) that school personnel grow professionally and personally as they undertake collectively or individually to identify problems, to diagnose possible causes and to develop and implement action plans for addressing identified problems; 2) that improvement in school climate is likely to take place on a continuing basis when responsibility for addressing such improvement plans is shared by all personnel.

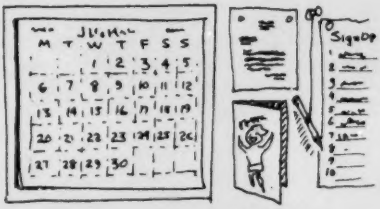
The idea for using the Administrative Practicum as a staff development format was born in the high school component of the Teacher Corps project. The high school presented the greatest challenge for the Teacher Corps staff during the planning year of the project. Arriving at the school, we found a school staff which was terribly concerned about certain critical issues which they thought needed immediate attention. A formal needs assessment revealed that the primary concerns had to do with poor communication among the various professional layers within the school, inadequate security for personnel within and outside the school, inadequate program articulation, poor school discipline and the lack of healthy school-community relations.

After much planning it became clear that teachers were willing to work on individual activities but needed some incentive for such involvement. How could this be accomplished? At the college, the department of secondary education had on record a 3-credit, graduate level course entitled "Practicum in Educational Administration". The decision was made to adapt this course and under its aegis provide teachers and administrators academic credit for their participation in a supervised activity dealing with school climate. The adaptation of the practicum required participants to:

1. work with a Teacher Corps staff member and a principal to identify a problem;
2. develop a plan for solving the identified problem replete with processes, programs and time frames;
3. pilot the process or program as delineated for problem solution;

4. make recommendations to the administration and the Teacher Corps staff upon completion of practicum.

The four practica which evolved during the first year of the implementation at the high school had to do with: 1) communication problems between regular and special education instructors, 2) coordination of the reading program throughout the school, 3) attendance record-keeping, and 4) high student absenteeism.



A review of the first round of practica showed that in some cases one semester of activity was not enough time for the successful resolution of certain problems. We also found that in some cases there was a spiraling effect in that some teachers who embarked at the start of the practicum rather reluctantly became terribly interested as the semester went along and worked on problems without requesting academic credits or clocking the amount of time devoted to the problem.

During the next year the idea of the practicum was expanded to include the middle and elementary schools of the project. Participants met as a group once a month over the year. Sessions focused on the individual action plans — problem identification, problem solution, and progress of implementation. Learning from the high school experience, participants modified the model as indicated in Chart A, and participation rose from 5 teachers to 20.

A CASE STUDY

At the start of the school year in the Oliver Wendell Holmes Middle School one 8th grade cluster of four teachers indicated at a cluster meeting that relations between the school and community and communication between the school and parents needed immediate attention. After a short discussion on this observation, it was decided that the problem would be put on the next meeting's agenda for deeper consideration, and that the Teacher Corps facilitator assigned to the building be invited to attend. The matter was addressed fully at the second meeting with cluster members agreeing that school-community relations were poor, that parents were not fully aware of the various academic programs and special events that were in operation in the school, and that steps should be taken by the school to ensure that parents were not cut-off from their children's education. What could the 8th grade cluster do about the problem? What

CHART A

Practicum in Education Administration — Teacher Corps
(Revised Fall 1980)

Stage I — Development of Proposal

A. **Problem Statement**

1. Participant will identify problem or need.
2. Participant will do some background research and consult with Teacher Corps facilitator and principal.
3. Participant will state problem which will be the focus of the practicum.

B. **Proposal Development**

1. Participant will develop a proposal explaining what he/she intends to do to remedy the problem.
2. Participant will identify projected milestones in practicum exercise.

Stage II — Submission and Approval of Proposal

A. Proposal will be submitted to Teacher Corps facilitator and principal

B. Proposal must be approved by project director and Boston State College Graduate Office.

Stage III — Practicum Exercise

A. Participant must devote at least 5 hours a week to practicum duties.

B. Participant must keep a log of all activities which must be signed off weekly by principal.

C. Participant must meet with Teacher Corps facilitator on 5th, 10th, and 15th week of practicum.

D. Participant must develop recommendations for institutionalizing the positive outcomes of the practicum. This will be an action-plan.

Stage IV — Institutionalization

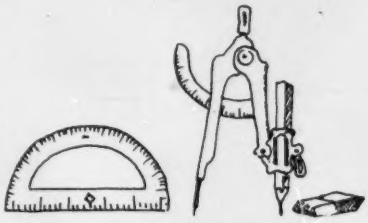
A. Participant must spend one semester implementing the action plan

B. Participant will develop an evaluation report for distribution to school faculty

Stage V — Practicum Sign-Off

At completion of practicum, participant will receive 6 semester hours of credit.

kinds of strategies could be devised to relieve the situation? To what extent could the support and encouragement of the administrators and other teachers be obtained or assured? These were examples of the probing questions that surfaced at the meeting and which members thought needed answers. The principal of the school was invited to the third cluster meeting and was impressed with the cluster's intent. He indicated a willingness to work with the cluster on the identified problems. Buoyed by his encouragement, the cluster proceeded to map out a series of activities, strategies and responsibilities they thought would get to the heart of the problem. Together they worked out the following schedule:



Teacher A would be responsible for preparing a fortnightly newsletter to parents. The newsletter would inform parents of past, present and upcoming school events.

Teacher B would be responsible for writing a bi-weekly statement for publication in the local community newspaper about ongoing activities in the school.

Teacher C would be responsible for developing and supervising a plan for a series of open house meetings between parents and 8th grade cluster teachers.

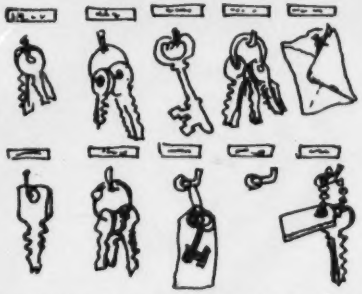
Teacher D was responsible for managing and coordinating all segments of the practicum as well as maintaining the physical environment including bulletin boards, corridors, window decorations, etc. of the 8th grade cluster.

Implementation of the activities began in earnest in November, 1980 and continued to June, 1981. Approximately 15 newsletters were sent home to parents. Newsletters were kept brief and written in a manner that would interest their intended readers. Information in the newsletter included basic descriptions of academic programs, sports news, and special events. Materials for the publication were contributed by teachers, administrators, and members of the student council.

Each teacher was expected to keep a log of events surrounding the implementation of the practicum and each was expected to share his/her observations and learnings at cluster meetings. Clearly the opportunities for professional growth through planning, sharing and coordination were made possible through this medium. The results of activities have been far-reaching. The response of parents and the community has been

remarkable . . . many more parents are visiting the school than ever before. The school's first evening "open house" sponsored by the practicum held in April was very well received by parents. Calls made to parents relative to student performance, discipline or tardiness are no longer being met with resistance.

The establishment of a newspaper club in the school with children from the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades contributing news articles; the placement of a news box in the school office where teachers, parents and administrators may deposit items for newsletters or local newspapers; and the creation of four general parent meetings with teachers and administrators during the academic year have provided opportunities for administrators and teachers at the Holmes to soar beyond the strict confines of the classroom. They have experienced professional growth through the development of plans to improve a school's climate which capitalizes on parental support and community involvement.



John Norwood in chapter one indicated that conflict often exists between home and school because parents do not really understand the purposes of the school's educational program and because schools are not exactly certain about what parents expect of them. To resolve the differences in expectations, Norwood suggests that parents, teachers and administrators must find viable ways of working together so that the school's educational plans or programs reflect the collaborative effort of parents, community and schools. The Administrative Practicum has gone a long way toward achieving that in the project schools.

FINDINGS

Some of the findings from the initial two years of the Administrative Practicum are:

1. Teachers have many strengths and skills which have not been previously recognized. Through being with the problems on a day-to-day basis, teachers can devise more practical solutions and when given the authority and assistance to implement change, can do it very successfully.

2. Individuals who participate in an activity initially for credit, can move through meaningful participation to a more internal reward system.

3. The collaboration between teachers and administrators in practicum activity has resulted in improved channels of communication and a greater professional esprit de corps.

4. Administrators need the skills necessary to identify problems and to encourage their staff to identify problems and to solve them.

5. The practicum moves the principal into his/her important role of educational leader.

6. The practicum encourages action and minimizes apathy.

7. It is important that some mechanism or policy be established so that all staff members in a school can be kept informed of the nature, scope and implementation of all practica taking place in the school.

The Administrative Practicum has proven to be an effective staff development model. In the three schools in which it has been implemented thus far, notable improvement in school climate has taken place. Teachers and administrators are asking more questions, are working together on additional problems, and the communication among all professional layers in the schools has improved. Relations between the school with community and parents have improved drastically. The Administrative Practicum, through its sharing of responsibility for problem solving, a new sense of powerfulness is emerging.

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GOAL-ORIENTED STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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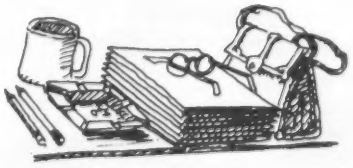
Staff development has been with us in education for many years now, but there is still much confusion in our use of terms such as staff development, inservice, professional development, personal growth, adult education, etc. Frequently

the terms are used interchangeably, but they can not all mean the same thing. There must be some conceptual order that will allow us to distinguish among these terms.

Most of the terms are used to describe learning which begins after a person completes a degree and obtains certification. Education to this point has been preparation for employment. Once a person has a degree, certification, and a teaching job, he or she becomes a professional. It would seem logical that any education that occurs after employment could be considered part of some bigger educational framework such as CONTINUING EDUCATION. It can be assumed all professionals must continue their education, that no initial preparation program can prepare a professional sufficiently to last a lifetime. Thus we can assume that all educators will have a need for continuing education.

Whether we call our learning "growth" or "development" appears idiosyncratic, but growth is usually associated with babies getting bigger — which can be seen. Development is less tangible and is relatively hard to see. Plants grow, but development appears more concerned with long term changes in people. Thus "development" seems more appropriate than "growth" when discussing the learning of adults.

After employment, one kind of continuing education is STAFF DEVELOPMENT or adult learning which serves the schools' purposes. If the school where a person works believes the staff need to learn something to improve students' learning, that's staff development and the school pays for it. Staff development is NOT distinguished by who is involved in making the decision, whether everyone attends all the same learning activities, or where the learning occurs. These aspects may, however, determine whether or not staff development is effective. In the past we have used these and other aspects of effective staff development to try to distinguish between inservice, professional development, and staff development, but this has not occurred.



The distinguishing feature is whose purpose is served by the continuing education: school purpose or individual purpose. If a school decides mainstreaming is a goal, then all of us as part of our work in the school this year are going to get better at mainstreaming special needs students and one of the ways we can do it is through the staff development provided by the school.

The models presented in this booklet are examples of staff development in secondary schools. The three examples have goals directly relating to improvements within specific schools. Many staff within the schools in the Boston, Worcester, and Lowell projects were involved in determining these school-wide goals. Even when the Lowell project shifted to working with department heads, the goal focus remained much the same. School goals determine the content area for staff development, and as the goals change, the content focus changes. Thus a course in mainstreaming might be reimbursed by the school one year and not two years later when the schools' goals are different.

Staff development can apply to all personnel not only the professional educators within a building. As pointed out by John Norwood, other personnel in a school have important contact with students. A program for playground and lunchroom monitors may indeed address school goals such as improving school morale or reducing discipline problems within the total school and would be appropriate staff development.

Another kind of continuing education is PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, adult learning which serves the individual's purpose. If a teacher decides to learn something because she wants to get better at her job, that's professional development and the individual teacher pays for it. If an elementary teacher decides to get special education certification that's professional development as no one else decided she should do that. But if the school decides we all need to do a better job at mainstreaming (our school improvement goal) that's staff development and the school has responsibility for helping staff in that building reach that goal. For example, a teacher at Big Bend Elementary School could be taking a course at the college in mainstreaming as staff development for which the school reimburses her. At the same time she could be taking courses for counselor certification for which the school does not reimburse her.

Few schools have clarified this concept of purpose as it relates to the continuing education of professionals. Large amounts of money are spent by local school districts to reimburse teachers and principals taking courses which they as individuals elect or need to continue their certification for employment. That should be professional development as it does not serve any total school purpose. Little money or time is available for learning addressing specific school problems or goals, yet it is this school-specific learning which is considered here as staff development and has the most potential for school improvement. One or two staff development days a year is the norm, but rarely is there a school-wide problem or goal focus

to this limited activity. Without a school-wide goal, staff development is only professional development for individuals in a school. The power of staff development lies in its potential ability of meeting the school's purpose of better educating students.

The responsibility for school improvement addressing specific purposes lies with a school's educational staff and its community. Education is still the responsibility of the local community and the people it employs. If a school's improvement depends on its staff learning to do something better, then it's the school's responsibility to facilitate and pay for the staff development or learning. Other interested groups can assist or provide, but the responsibility lies with the school.

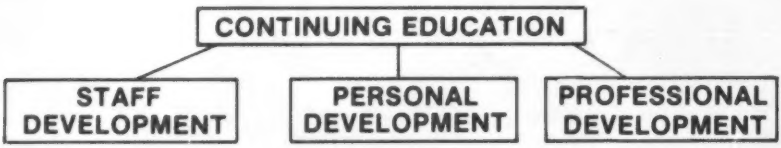
This concept of school purpose and staff development can be useful for providers. A university, as part of its service mission, does provide continuing education. Whether a course or program is staff development is not the university's decision. That decision is made by individual students or by the school(s) represented by students in a course. If students are taking the course as part of a school-wide improvement effort, then it is likely to be staff development for which they will be reimbursed. If they are taking it to improve themselves apart from a school determined purpose, then it is professional development. The content of the course may not change for professional development and staff development students but the impact of the course may vary greatly. Individuals may learn something and do things differently in their teaching, but rarely will that individual learning significantly change a school. For significant change to occur, many individuals in the same place must be addressing a common goal, although there may be variation in how individuals within the group address the goal.

As part of its division of continuing education the university would continue to provide both staff development and professional development, but decision-making about purpose would continue to lie with the school or individuals. Other providers such as professional associations and state departments also have a legitimate responsibility for the provision of continuing education, but the purpose served would be the decision of the school or individuals.

Another kind of continuing education is PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT or learning which serves the individual's

personal life. If a teacher decides to learn something which interests her and has little relationship to her work, that is personal development and again she pays. All of us have examples of the teacher who takes a course in "macrame" as staff development and gets reimbursed because she plans to use that as an activity in her third grade class. In this conceptualization, the "macrame" course is not staff development unless it can clearly be related to achievement of some stated school goal.

To summarize: continuing education begins after certification and when a person begins working in the education profession. Staff development is a mechanism used by schools to help employees improve in relation to specific school goals. Professional development is learning accrued by individuals to improve in their individual jobs, but is not targeted on a goal for the school. Personal development is learning for individuals with little relationship to their employment.



Much time and energy have gone into trying to determine what makes good staff development. Some believe it is the mythical qualities of the instructor, others believe teacher involvement in the planning process is critical, and the list goes on. A more valid criteria for determining effective staff development might be whether or not the staff development achieved its intended purpose.

Until those of us working in staff development begin to address seriously the setting of clear, meaningful goals and to determine valid ways to judge their achievement, we will never be able to answer the critical question: Can staff development lead to school improvement? Obviously that is an evaluative question. John Norwood, in the initial article, states that effective staff development programs must include a system for monitoring. Monitoring systems rarely focus on outcomes or achievement and seldom are they evaluative. Evaluation necessitates making a judgement about the value of the activities.

Still, evaluation of staff development is a norm and occurs regularly. After workshops and at the end of courses a form for participants to complete is passed out. The form usually asks the participants to evaluate the instructor, the format, the methods used, and the value of the experience for them. Based on this information, the staff development is considered successful or unsuccessful. The focus of the evaluation is wrong. It really doesn't matter much if participants felt good, liked the instructor, or enjoyed the activities — which is really what the questions are asking. What matters is that over time the school's goal of improvement was achieved. Instead of involvement in the planning process it honestly may be more important for groups of educators within a school to spend significant amounts of time arriving at a concise school goal and deciding how we will know if the goal has been reached (indicators of achievement) and then trusting in the integrity of the staff employed by the school, whose salaries normally represent at least 80% of the total school budget, that they will work every way they can to achieve that goal because we all agree it is important for the education of our children. Unless staff development can be shown to be important and worth the time, effort, and money it will become another fad of the past.

Last year a large school system formed a committee to address the poor writing skills of its students. The whole system was mustered to address this problem in many different ways. One was staff development with only a few teachers involved. Additionally, press releases occurred sporadically over the year on what was being done about the problem. At the end of the year, press releases presented information on national writing contest winners, local writing contests, test scores, etc. Something had happened. Many staff worked in many individual ways to address a general goal of writing skills improvement and information was collected and widely publicized to let everyone know the goal was being reached. Staff development was one dimension of this total school system effort. The effort was perceived as important by many and evaluative information was collected and disseminated so all knew the goal was successfully achieved. There can be little meaningful achievement or feeling of success if we do not know where we are going or if we ever got there. What we have been calling teacher burnout may well be more a reflection of not having enough information about what

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we have achieved or accomplished than overwork or lack of particpation in decision-making.

School improvement is possible and staff development is a mechanism for bringing that about, but seldom is there information available to know we have succeeded. Information on school improvement in secondary schools is rare. Most of us have become victims of the myth that secondary schools can not be changed and we can list twenty reasons why not. The examples in Boston, Worcester, and Lowell refute this myth. They have used staff development as a mechanism for making improvements in secondary schools. The processes used involved many educators in determining school-wide goals. Teachers, department heads, and administrators were provided with professional time during the school day to carry out staff development activities which addressed the school goals. The provision of professional time to address the goals clearly indicates the goals were perceived as important. The next critical step is collecting and disseminating information to those involved about the accomplishment of the goal. Without that crucial information we are left with the devastating feeling of, "why bother," and the myth of no change continues.

Last week a famous TV newscaster made the profound statement, "There is no such thing as good news." Any information that is news has to be bad, horrid, tragic. People will only listen or watch disasters. That's not true. The public instead stops reading and turns off the television, and then is perceived as apathetic, but if all we hear is the horror of life we stop listening, and try to go on doing the best we can at whatever we are about. The authors of this booklet are pioneers — bringing good news — secondary schools can improve through staff development.

REFERENCES:

1. *The stimulus for many of the ideas presented here is: Standing Committee on Instruction and Professional Development, "Continuing Education for Teachers; A Framework for New Practices," Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1980.*

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